



Ontario Women's Directorate

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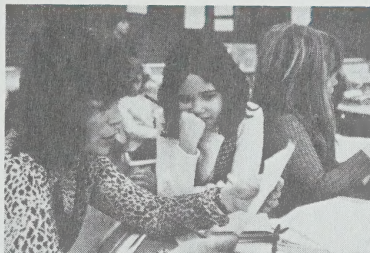
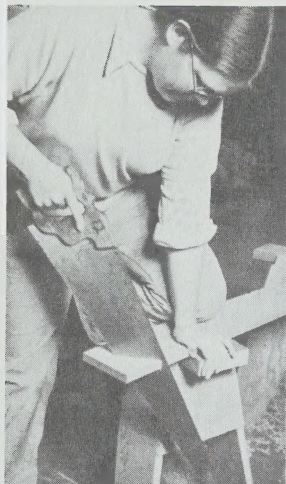
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SEARCH

Introduction

This booklet has been prepared for women who are planning to:

- **Enter the workforce for the first time**
- **Return to the workforce after an extended absence**
- **Find new opportunities in the workforce**

Whatever your reasons for seeking a job, you will need a plan of action that will involve taking a series of steps. The purpose of this booklet is to help you to work through these steps according to a plan that will meet your own individual needs.



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TAKING A LOOK AT YOURSELF

This section is designed to help you look at yourself realistically and creatively. It will help you explore your values, attitudes, experience and expectations, interests and abilities. You will be laying the groundwork for identifying the kinds of work you will find most satisfying. You will also come back to this section when you are ready to write your resume and prepare for your job interviews.

Take your time, as careful thought here will help you avoid disappointment later in your job search.

Values and goals

Whatever your reasons for seeking a job, you will probably be setting out on your job search with mixed feelings. Although excited by the prospect of this new direction in your life, you may be having doubts about the likelihood of finding a suitable job, or the possibility of making the career choices that are best for you. These feelings are shared by most people who are looking for employment. However, once you get started, taking one step at a time, the road to a successful job search becomes much easier.

Keeping some of these reasons for work in mind, think about what work means to you personally, and consider carefully the role you see it playing in your life. This will help you to determine the amount of energy, time and expense that you will need to put into your immediate job search, and into your career planning for the future. It will be easier to set your

There are no right or wrong answers to these questions, or to any of the questions that follow in this workbook. The questions are just there to assist you in making decisions that will lead to your desired goal.

In considering your personal values and goals relating to your job search, you may want to write down some of your ideas. The space below is provided for this purpose.

Self-assessment

The next five worksheets help you assess your practical experience and highlight your strengths and areas of achievement. Don't overlook the importance of any experience: it might reveal a skill,

talent, or area of knowledge which could be useful in the job market.

This section lists only your formal learning experience. It is important to remember that other life experiences contribute to learning, as you will discover in completing the next three worksheets.

A. Education

Type of School	Number of Years Attended	Courses Completed	Degree, Diploma or Certificate Achieved
Elementary School			
Secondary School			
Post-Secondary			
Other			

Which were your best and favourite subjects?

Why?

Which subjects did you not like?

Why not?

Make a note of all the jobs you have had, and describe what you actually did in each position. It is important to include every task at this stage in your planning, as well as your responsibilities relating to

supervision of other staff, problem solving, organization, research and decision making. Also list skills required such as dealing with people, writing, working with numbers, working with tools and machinery.

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Which jobs did you like most?

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Why?

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Which jobs did you not like?

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Why not?

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Your voluntary work experience is extremely important, particularly if you have little recent employment experience. Describe your voluntary jobs in as much detail as your paid jobs.

Your voluntary work experience is extremely important, particularly if you have little recent employment experience. Describe your voluntary jobs in as much detail as your paid jobs.

[illegible]

What type of work did you enjoy most?

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Why?

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What type of work did you enjoy least?

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Why?

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D. Work in the home

People frequently overlook the work they do in the home when they assess themselves for the job market. Describe your work in the home in terms of skills, knowledge required, and areas of responsibility, just as you would for paid employment experience. At this stage don't ignore any possibilities.

Describe all the tasks you have performed that contributed to the operation of your family home: for example, repairing small appliances, refinishing furniture, baking, child care, gardening.

If you have been responsible for the management of your home, describe your areas of responsibility and expertise: for example, budgeting, meal planning, organizing family activities, health care.

What part of your work in the home has given you greatest satisfaction? Why?

What part of your work in the home has given you least satisfaction? Why?

E. Special interests and hobbies

Interests and hobbies are usually an expression of our individuality. They reveal a lot about us, such as our level of creativity, athletic ability, degree of perseverance, desire for challenge. By listing these you will get clues that will assist you in making decisions during your job search.

List your interests and hobbies

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Which of these gives you most satisfaction? Why?

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Are you noted for any skill you have developed through your interests and hobbies, to the extent that friends and neighbours seek a service from you? If yes, describe this service. If no, list a skill you might like to develop in this way.

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Summary

By now you will have identified some of your strengths and weaknesses, and possible areas for further development. Keeping this in mind, complete the following worksheet which will prepare you for the next step in your job search.

Review all the previous worksheets, and select the types of work you do well and enjoy. For example, you may enjoy driving and demonstrate mechanical ability in other activities. With this type of aptitude you might enjoy such jobs as bus driver, or small appliance service technician. List what you consider to be your major strengths in the space provided below.

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Now list the personal qualities you feel would be an asset in any job. For example, you may be very organised, tactful, persevering, articulate, decisive or assertive.

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List specific skills you have developed through training and experience, for example, typing, computer programming, drafting, proofreading. If you are planning a career change you may feel that the skills you already have will be of little use. At this point, however, it is useful to consider every job related skill; many skills can be useful in more than one type of job.

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Finally, note the areas where you lack confidence. Don't sell yourself short, but don't over-estimate your skills either. The purpose of this self-examination is to help you make a realistic job choice, so try to be honest with yourself.

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Career counselling

If you are having difficulty completing your self-assessment, you may need assistance from a counsellor.

If you are in high school, your guidance department will be your major resource. A guidance counsellor can provide you with an interest test and help you assess your strengths and weaknesses. Resource materials in your guidance centre will inform you of the wide range of occupations now open to women, educational requirements for these occupations, and where to go for training. The public library also provides some of this vocational information.

For adults, a variety of counselling options is available. Career counselling offers a range of services, e.g. educational counselling, interest testing, aptitude testing, pre-employment counselling and job placement.

Counselling services are generally available at Canada Employment Centres (Manpower), community colleges and universities, YMCA, YWCA, Jewish Vocational Services, and community employment projects serving women. Since not all organizations provide all servi-

ces, it is best to phone ahead and check whether the service you want is available and whether there is a fee for service. Private employment agencies also provide some of these services, but the fee is usually higher, and the services are more intensive and specialized. In shopping for the service best able to meet your needs, the following are some good questions to ask:

- what is the charge per hour or per session? Are there special fees for special services, such as testing?
- is the counselling provided in group sessions or is it on an individual basis?
- how long does the complete service take?
- is the counselling oriented toward helping women explore all employment options, including those not traditional to women?
- is the emphasis on self-assessment, education or job placement?
- is testing provided: interest, aptitude, other?
- is personal assistance given in the preparation of the resume and covering letters to employers?

TAKING A LOOK AT YOUR JOB EXPECTATIONS AND THE JOB MARKET

This section is designed to assist you in assessing your job expectations. It will also provide you with information on the job market, and will help you increase your ability to make important choices about your career.

It is important to remember that as with any other market, the job market works on principles of supply and demand. Career choices usually involve a compromise between what you would most enjoy doing, and what the job market needs and wants.

When the job market is especially competitive, it is wise to look at options where the demand is high. Most traditional female jobs in clerical and human services are over-crowded and opportunities may be limited. Many of the skills in these jobs can be transferred to non-traditional fields of work such as management, marketing, service consulting, and public relations.

Many women today are developing new skills, as the whole range of jobs is steadily opening up to them, in fields such as industry, electronics, finance, tourism and the trades.

In Ontario there are laws obliging employers to hire, train, promote and pay women on an equal basis with men. For more information on this legislation, contact the Ontario Human Rights Commission, Ministry of Labour.

Job expectations

Having determined some of the skills, personal qualities, and level of expertise you have to offer the employer, your next step is to look ahead at your job expectations. Review once more the goals and

values you listed at the beginning of the workbook. Do these need any adjusting at this point?

Now go ahead and complete the following worksheet, to see what you are expecting personally and professionally from your participation in the workforce.

Is location of employment important to you? a) Do you prefer a city, town, or rural environment? b) Would you be willing to relocate?

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Are you free to travel?

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How much responsibility do you want in your job? Do you prefer to work independently or do you prefer direction? Do you want to supervise others?

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What amount of time are you willing to contribute? Do you want to work full time or part time? Are you restricted to daytime hours?

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Do you want the opportunity to advance later?

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Do you prefer to work indoors or outdoors? Is it important that your workplace be neat and clean? Does noise bother you? Are there any other factors about your environment that are important to you?

Are you willing to do work that requires physical strength?

Do you prefer to work for a large or small organization?

Do you prefer working on your own or as a member of a team?

Do you have long term career goals? Are you looking for opportunities to gain new skills on the job? Are promotion opportunities important to you? Explain.

What salary would you expect? Take into account your family needs, the cost of working, personal needs, and your long term career plans.

Financial expectations

It is recommended that every woman give careful thought to working out a budget as part of her job search strategy. This is particularly important for women entering the workforce for the first time, or women returning to work after an extended period. The realities of the cost of living can be quite a shock.

In order to determine realistic salary expectations it is important to prepare an estimated budget. This budget assumes that a woman is self supporting and is financially responsible for her family. Where this is not the case, items can be adjusted accordingly.

Household budget includes:

food	\$
rent	
clothing	
utilities	
home upkeep	
health care	
insurance	
miscellaneous	
<i>Total</i>	\$

Cost of working budget includes:

extra clothes for work	\$
transportation	
lunches	
child care	
hidden extras (personal care, laundry services, prepared foods, etc.)	
<i>Total</i>	\$

Personal budget includes:

entertainment	\$
travel	
hobbies and interests	
other	
<i>Total</i>	\$

Total monthly budget \$

Career planning budget includes:

Education (for self improvement and for career advancement)	\$
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Car (many interesting jobs require the use of a car) \$

Emergency funds for crisis \$

Reserve fund for future increase in standard of living \$

Total \$

- If you are married, some deductions – hospital insurance for instance – can be taken from your own or your husband's paycheque. Unemployment Insurance premiums and Canada Pension Plan contributions are other deductions to consider.
- Check into your particular tax situation with the District Taxation Office – don't overlook tax exemptions for child care.
- For information on government subsidized day care, contact the Day Nurseries Branch of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Information is also available at your municipal social services department. Libraries and community information centres may have up-to-date information on day care placements in your area.

Having researched the cost of all the above items very carefully, go back to the 'Job expectations' worksheet, and see if you need to readjust your 'financial expectations'.

Family adjustments

If you are a young woman engaged for the first time in the difficult task of choosing a career, you may want to gain the support of your family. This may require that you be sensitive to their values and interests.

Parents are sometimes concerned when their daughter decides to make a serious commitment to a career. They may fear that her career will conflict with her future family obligations. It is important to remember that women are now successfully combining career and family through better planning and organization.

There may also be concern about the image their daughter presents, should she choose a non-traditional area of work. This, too, is changing, as women are now accepted in a wide variety of occupations formerly reserved for men. It is now not unusual for parents to point with pride to their daughter who is an accountant, an auto mechanic or a police officer.

Career counsellors are advising parents that English, Mathematics and Science are required subjects for entry into most occupations these days. Girls who avoid these subjects at the senior levels of high school risk being barred from a wide range of career options with a future, including those traditionally considered "female occupations" such as nursing and child care.

If you are a mature woman who has a family of her own, it is important to consider how your career plan will effect their lives. On entering the workforce you will be adding the role of employee to your existing roles of wife, mother and homemaker. You may be feeling some concern about the possibility of conflict between your job and family responsibilities having an adverse effect on your children.

Mothers who work are exposed to a barrage of opinions on the effects of their employment on their children. Although these beliefs have failed to keep many women out of the workforce, they have caused a great deal of confusion and guilt. Is all this guilt necessary? Recent research into the effects of a mother's employment on her children indicates that it is not. Mothers who want to be in the labour force, but are not, and mothers who are in the labour force, but are beset by guilt, are the ones whose children seem to have adjustment difficulties. Thus, the key to your family's adjustment seems to be your attitude to your employment. Your children will respond positively to you as a working mother if you feel positive about your role and project this attitude. The following suggestions may help you in successfully keeping your family in the picture while you plan for your career:

- Try to involve your family in your venture. If they are able to share in your decision to seek employment, they are less likely to feel threatened by it. By enlisting their support, you will also be laying the groundwork for a co-operative approach to later changes.
- Encourage your children to discuss their concerns about the changes in your lives. If you are able to reassure them now, you may avoid future problems. Your children are also more likely to perceive your employment in a positive light if you are happy and confident in your decision to enter the workforce.
- Begin to re-assign household chores now. Perhaps the entire family could participate in the process of dividing the work evenly amongst themselves. Encourage their efforts despite the fact that their early attempts may be a little inept. Even if your son's first dinner is barely edible, eat it and give him credit for his accomplishment.
- Be wary of slipping back into old routines. If your family delays doing their chores, don't do them yourself because you feel this is easier than constantly having to remind them of the work. If you are carrying out dual jobs, it is

impossible to be a supermom, and super housekeeper as well as a paid worker. Every person has a limited supply of physical and emotional energy; if you are trying to do too much, you may end up with little time, love and affection to share with your family.

- Ask yourself if your standards of housekeeping are too rigid. You may find that you have internalized unrealistic standards of housekeeping set by television ads, friends and women's magazines. Is it really necessary to have the floor clean enough to eat off?
- Begin investigating child care facilities now. There are many types of child care available for pre-school children, but the most common are day care centres and family day care homes. For the older child you will need to make arrangements for after school hours, sick days and holidays. Getting your child into day care should not be left to the last minute as you may have to put your name on a waiting list. Also, you may want to shop to find the facility that best meets your standards and needs.

The job market

Once you have determined where your interests lie and what you expect of the job, you are ready to investigate the job market. Having completed the self-assessment, you will find that as you read descriptions of jobs you will begin to see yourself in some of them. You will also be able to recognize when a job is not suitable and will not capitalize on your strengths.

When investigating an occupation you will need to find out:

- what the work involves
- what qualifications are required
- whether job prospects are good
- whether jobs are available in the area in which you live
- the salary range in that particular occupation
- general working conditions and hours of work

There are a number of publications which contain the information you will need. You should find the publications listed below, as well as other career information, at your local public library, community college, Canada Employment Centre*, and high school guidance centre. Please note that these publications are subject to periodic change.

*Note: Federal Manpower Centres are now called Canada Employment Centres.

Apprenticeship

This book is a comprehensive source of information about the trades. It includes a job description, educational requirements and minimum wage for each occupation. Available from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, Communication Services Branch, 14th Floor, Mowat Block, 900 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario M7A 1L2, Tel.: (416) 965-6407; can be ordered free of charge.

Careers Canada

This is a series of booklets containing basic information about employment opportunities in each province and territory. Available in Canada Employment Centres.

Careers Provinces

This is a series of booklets containing basic information about a wide range of career opportunities in each province and territory. Available in Canada Employment Centres.

Career Selectors

The 180 occupations described in this publication are grouped into seven colour-keyed sections. Each section includes occupations which are linked either by subject matter, interests or nature of the work. The booklets in this series are: Business, Finance & Office; Service and Retailing; Science and Technical;

Communication and Creative Arts; Health and Paramedical; Community Service and Education; Industry and Trades. **Career Selector** is available from the Ontario Women's Directorate, Mowat Block, 4th floor, 900 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario M7A 1L2; can be ordered free of charge.

G.C. Occupational Information Monographs

A wide range of occupations is covered in this series of monographs. Detailed occupational information is presented in each monograph, including a description of the nature of the work, required qualifications, salary and related occupations. These monographs can be obtained from the Guidance Centre, College of Education, University of Toronto, 1000 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario M4W 2K8. Quantity prices are available.

Now that you have surveyed a wide range of job possibilities, you may have decided on a few which might be suitable. Don't be discouraged if you have not yet caught a glimpse of yourself in the careers you have explored. Keep looking until you find the answers.

Before you proceed ask yourself if you have overlooked any job possibilities. Have you been considering only the traditionally 'female' jobs? Women have become so accustomed to limiting themselves to a narrow range of jobs, they often overlook many promising options. Job opportunities in some of the traditionally 'female' fields are diminishing. But on the other hand, you have the opportunity now to choose a job that will be personally satisfying and well paid – don't allow yourself to be restricted by out-of-date sex role stereotypes.

Training opportunities

If you have selected a job for which you are already qualified, you are ready to proceed to the job search. However, you may be considering jobs which require additional education and training.

Some jobs provide on-the-job training and it is recommended that in applying for most jobs, you ask about these training opportunities.

Most jobs today require some level of formal training or education which must be acquired at a community college, trade school or university. The learning you gain will be an important investment in your future.

If you have not been employed for a number of years, you may need a refresher course to upgrade your skills and give you more confidence. Don't worry about going back to school – your maturity can be an advantage. After the initial adjustment mature women usually do well. Some colleges and universities offer orientation courses designed to assist the mature person with this adjustment. However, choose your courses carefully and be sure the training will qualify you for employment.

Information on courses given at universities and colleges across Ontario is available in the form of 'calendars' which are found in the reference section of your local library. Enquiries can also be made directly at the admissions department of any post-secondary institution.

The following directories are also important sources of information for post secondary education courses:

Horizons – A guide to educational opportunities in Ontario beyond the secondary school level – published by the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

Continuing Education Directory for Metropolitan Toronto – educational and recreational opportunities offered on a part-time basis, or by correspondence, for adults – published by the Metropolitan Toronto Library Board.

If you require financial assistance to further your education there are two main sources:

- Canada Employment Training Programs; enquire at your local Canada Employment Centre.
- Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP); enquire at the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, 900 Bay St., Mowat Block, Toronto, Ontario.

Following is a list of some of the types of training and financial assistance available:

- **High Schools Adult Education Programs.** This program includes both academic courses leading to a secondary school graduation diploma and skill courses (e.g. bookkeeping, typing).
- **Correspondence Course, Ministry of Education.** This is a home study program offering a wide range of courses leading to secondary school graduation. Information is available from the Ministry of Education at 909 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario M4W 3G2.
- **National Institutional Training Program (NITP).** This program offers educational upgrading, short-term skill training, and English language training for job seekers who are having difficulty finding employment. The courses are offered through community colleges. Canada Employment and Immigration (CEIC) pays students a living allowance while in training, tuition fees, and other sundry expenses. For information inquire at your local Canada Employment Centre.
- **General Industrial Training (GIT).** This program provides on-the-job skill training. The prospective employee must find an employer who will agree to train her. The employer may then be reimbursed by the CEIC, for a share of the training costs and trainee wages, if the program meets CEIC criteria. For more information, inquire at your local Canada Employment Centre.
- **Apprenticeship.** This is a training program for the skilled trades. It combines on-the-job training with classroom instruction. Trainees are paid a percentage of the journeyman wage while training, but never less than minimum wage. For more information contact the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, Apprenticeship Branch in your area. Apprenticeship information is also available at your local community college.
- **Introduction to Non-Traditional Occupations (INTO) and Women Into Trades and Technology (WITT)** are just two of the programs offered at community colleges, that prepare women for entry into trades and technology. These are orientation courses only, sometimes offering upgrading in math and science. Further training is usually required to enter these occupations.

- Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology. A wide range of diploma and certificate programs are offered through the colleges on a part-time or full-time basis. For information about student loans contact the admissions department of the college.
- University programs. Undergraduate courses are offered either part-time or full-time by universities. However, not all graduate programs are offered on a part-time basis. For information about student loans contact the admissions department of the university.
- College and university continuing education programs. These programs include both credit courses and special interest courses.
- Linkage. This is a training program for high school students where credit can be given for technical subjects towards an apprenticeship in a trade. Not available in all schools. Inquire at your guidance centre.
- OCAP (Ontario Career Action Program). This is a job placement program for people seeking their first job – aged 16-24. For information, contact your local community college placement office.

Please note that many of these programs are subject to change from time to time.

THE JOB SEARCH

It is good to remember that job seekers, however well qualified, receive more rejections than job offers. Since most of us are reluctant to invite rejection, we approach the job search with considerable anxiety. It is important to remember that a refusal of employment is not a personal rejection but, in fact, a normal part of the job search.

Once you have begun your job search you will find that the job market is very competitive. But you will also discover that there is a wider range of jobs open to women to-day than at any other time since World War II. In Ontario there are laws obliging employers to hire, train, promote and pay women on an equal basis with men.

Looking for a job is a full-time job. To find a position that is 'right' for you will take careful planning, an assertive approach and time. You don't want to stumble into the first available job and then spend years regretting your choice.

If you are presently employed, resist the temptation to resign before you have found another job. Being unemployed will put you under pressure to accept the first job offer. You will also have to explain why you resigned to prospective employers, and that can be difficult. If they feel your resignation was impulsive, it could raise doubts about your reliability and commitment. Furthermore, you may be penalized by the regulations of the Unemployment Insurance Commission if you leave your job voluntarily.

If you are unemployed and under some financial strain, consider accepting temporary work. This would resolve some of your financial problems while you continue looking for a more suitable job.

You have already laid the groundwork for your job search by analyzing what you have to offer an employer, and identifying the type of job you want. Now you are ready to start the search.

- Begin by preparing a resume.
- Then explore employment possibilities in your area.
- Finally, apply for specific positions.

The application form

In most cases, when you apply for a job, you are requested to complete an application form. You may want to complete the form at home, if the deadline for hiring permits. However, if you come prepared to answer standard questions that appear on most application forms, you will save time.

The following hints may help you in this endeavor.

- Be neat – use pen, or type if possible. The appearance reflects an image of you. Check spelling and grammar. Ask for two copies so that you can complete one in a rough form.
- Answer all questions. Blank spaces give the appearance that you are either sloppy and missed the question, or you did not understand the question. If you feel a question does not apply to you, or have some other reason for leaving it blank, state your reason.

Standard Application Form

Personal Data

XYZ Company		
Family Name	Given Name(s)	Telephone Number
Address		
Driver's Licence #		Other
Secondary School:		Business/Technical School:
Highest grade/level completed _____		Name of Course _____
Certificate/diploma received _____		Licence/Certificate awarded _____
College/University:		
Name of Program _____		Specialization _____
Diploma/Degree Awarded _____		
Other Courses, Workshops, Seminars:		

Education

An Attached list of courses or grades received can be helpful.

Work Related Skills

In this section relate your skills and work experience, including any volunteer work, to the qualifications of the position for which you are applying.

Work Experience

Present/last job title:
 Period of employment:
 Reason for leaving:
 Duties/responsibilities:

Previous job — same information

Previous job — same information

Here you need not just list duties, you may include the personal qualities you brought to these duties. It is important to list all jobs even if they do not relate to the position for which you are applying.

Other questions

Why are you interested in this position?

Here is a chance to promote yourself. Check back to the self-assessment section in this workbook. Indicate your interest to commit yourself seriously to the job, including career goals, if these would help.

May we approach the employers listed for references?
Are there other references?

Whenever possible, list the telephone numbers of the people who will provide references for you. It is advisable to check with these people first, so that they are prepared.

Finally, include any important information which supports you as a good candidate for the job, even if the questions omit this information. Keep all answers as brief as possible, so as to avoid a cluttered appearance, and to respect the limited time employers have to read applications.

The resume

What is it?

The resume is an outline of your qualifications, paid and unpaid work experience, and personal information, that you feel relates best to the job you are seeking. It should be prepared in such a way that the employer can quickly assess why you would be a good candidate for the job.

While the resume provides similar information to that requested on standard job application forms, it differs in that the applicant has control over the image it presents. The design and content of a resume should present a positive picture of you in relation to the job you are seeking. On the basis of this picture an employer will decide whether or not you are a suitable candidate for a job interview.

Who should have one?

Job seekers often assume that only executives and professional people need resumes. Today people at all levels of employment should have one, as it can be a valuable asset in a job search. Maximize your chances by using every available tool.

Where to start?

Look back over the five self-assessment worksheets you completed earlier in this workbook, for it is here you will find the information you need for your resume. Do not overlook the informal job experience you gained from volunteer work or work in the home. If these are the major source of your experience, consider using the functional format for your resume, as outlined later in this workbook.

What are the rules for resume writing?

There are a number of specific rules you will need to consider when writing a resume. They will help you avoid some of the errors frequently made by job seekers.

- *Your resume should include:*
 - personal identification
 - education
 - work experience
 - activities and interests (optional)
 - career aims or goals (optional)
 - references upon request
- List your name, address and telephone number at the top of the resume. This may sound obvious, but employers often complain that this information is not clearly listed at the beginning of resumes. If an employer is rushed and cannot find your telephone number, you may simply not be contacted for an interview.

- Organize all the main details of your experience under headings, so that the employer can follow your resume easily. Don't expect the employer to spend a great deal of time trying to work through poorly organized information.
- Condense all the information onto two pages. Employers are less likely to read everything in a six page resume – they don't have the time.
- Use action words, such as planned, developed, organized, supervised, produced, managed, administered and wrote, to describe your experience. Avoid vague descriptions of your work. For example, 'handled', 'involved in', 'in charge of' do not describe the work you actually performed.
- If you worked on a team, separate out the work you performed yourself. Avoid phrases like 'assisted the manager with ...' This does not tell the employer what you did.
- Where possible, describe the results of your work. If you developed a marketing plan that increased sales, mention the results.
- It is not necessary to include personal details such as number of children, age, marital status and husband's occupation. It is not relevant and detracts from the business-like approach in the rest of your resume. While the Ontario Human Rights Code does not prohibit employers from asking for such information, they may not differentiate between applicants on the basis of age, sex or marital status.
- Do not include names of references on your resume. Instead indicate that they will be provided at the interview. You will be sending out a considerable number of resumes, and you don't want your references to receive frequent and unexpected calls.
- Always send original, error-free, typewritten copies or good reproductions of your resume – no carbon copies. The appearance of your resume will make an impression on the employer.

Which is the best format?

Although there are some very specific rules for writing a resume, there isn't a single style that is suitable for everyone. The two most common formats are the chronological resume and the functional resume. Examples of both are included in this section, so that you can select the one that works best for you.

Voluntary experience and education can be presented in the same way under separate headings. If, however, you have gained your most valuable experience through voluntary experience, combine it with your paid jobs under the heading 'Experience'. At the end of each job description you could indicate whether it was paid or unpaid.

The chronological format

This is the most commonly used format and the one employers are most familiar with. It is most effective if you have had a series of jobs that are easily understood. It is less effective if you have had unusual jobs or a break in your employment.

In this type of resume, you would list your employment in chronological order, starting with your most recent job and working back. For each job list the employment date first, followed by the job title, the name and address of the company for which you worked and a detailed job description.

Sample Chronological Resume

Pat W.
60 New Street
Anywhere, Ontario
N0D 1X3
(416) 123-4567 (business)
(416) 765-4321 (home)

WORK EXPERIENCE

1973 to present

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, Operating Branch, Department of Resources, Anywhere, Ontario.

Provide administrative support to the Branch Director. Recruit support staff for permanent and temporary positions. Supervise four secretarial staff, establish work priorities and assign work accordingly.

Streamlined clerical procedures thus eliminating a chronic back-log of orders. Manage and allocate branch funds.

Respond to public inquiries regarding the policies and services of the branch, and refer to other branches and community services when necessary.

1972 - 1973

SECRETARY, Special Committee, Department of New Initiatives, Anywhere, Ontario.

Provided administrative and secretarial support to the committee. Hired, trained and supervised four clerical staff. Arranged accommodation and publicity for public meetings at the request of regional representatives of the committee. Distributed information and committee publications to these representatives on an ongoing basis. During two conferences sponsored by the committee I wrote daily newsletters and information bulletins and distributed them among delegates.

On completion of my contract with the committee I was recommended for a permanent position in the New Initiatives Department.

1971 - 1972

SECRETARY TO MANAGER, Bright Company, 22 New Street, Anywhere, Ontario.

Provided secretarial services for manager and technical director. Screened job applicants, maintained personnel records. Audited time cards of all hourly personnel. Developed and implemented a marketing filing system. Conducted ongoing revision of information and price manuals.

VOLUNTARY EXPERIENCE

Extensive fund raising experience in a variety of community organizations. I have organized and implemented fund raising campaigns for the Anywhere Tree Planting Association and the Children's Education Society.

EDUCATION

Secondary School Graduation Diploma (Commercial) Technical and Commercial High School, Anywhere, 1950

Studying for Certificate, Qualified Administrative Assistant, School of Continuing Studies, University of Anywhere.

References available on request.

Jane G. has had very little paid work experience, but has acquired many useful skills through her volunteer work. These skills are not highlighted in her chronological resume.

Pat W. has had a number of jobs with no significant breaks in her employment. The job titles show clearly that she has improved her level of employment with each job change. A chronological format works well for her.

Chronological Resume

Jane G.
100 New Avenue
Anywhere, Ontario
Telephone: (416) 312-1111

EXPERIENCE

Clerk-Typist, Dominion Business Co. 1952-54

Cashier, Super Grocery Store, after school and during summer holidays.
1950-52

EDUCATION

Secondary School Graduation Diploma, Happy Days Secondary School. 1952

University of Anywhere, currently working toward Certificate in Public Administration, 1976 to present.

VOLUNTEER WORK

Taught Sunday School and head of Church Mission Group; was a 'Pink Lady' at General Hospital; active in municipal politics, volunteer canvasser Heart Fund, Canadian Cancer Society; Leader C.G.I.T.

HOBBIES

Crafts; reading; sewing.

The functional format

The purpose of this type of resume is to highlight what you have done, with less emphasis on where or when you did it. You will find this style particularly effective if there is a break in your employment, or if you have had few jobs and therefore wish to emphasize voluntary experience. You might also consider this format if you are planning a career change and need to emphasize skills rather than job titles.

First decide which skills you wish to market, and list them in one section of the resume. List the actual jobs you have held and your educational achievements under separate headings.

When considering the functional resume, bear in mind that it is less widely used and some employers may prefer the more standard style. However, if this format effectively highlights your major skills and abilities, there is a good chance that it will also get you some interviews.

To highlight her skills more effectively she re-wrote her resume in the functional format in order to apply for the following position:

Director, Community Information Centre

Required to direct the operation of a newly established information centre. Responsibilities include: recruitment and supervision of a small staff including some volunteers; providing information and referral where appropriate to a variety of client groups; liaison and co-ordination with government and community services; public relations on behalf of the centre.

Qualifications: degree in the social sciences; experience in recruitment and supervision of staff; experience in public relations; familiarity with government at all levels.

Functional Resume

Jane G.
100 New Avenue
Anywhere, Ontario
Telephone: (416) 312-1111

EXPERIENCE

1975 to present, CHAIRPERSON, Board of Directors, Volunteer Bureau

1974 - 1976, ORGANIZER, Committee Room, Alderperson Sky

1971 - 1973, MANAGER, General Hospital Tuck Shop

1967 - 1971, CHAIRPERSON, Anywhere Fund raising Drive, Canadian Cancer Society

SKILLS

ADMINISTRATION

Recruited and trained volunteer staff for the Canadian Cancer Society fund raising drive, the General Hospital Tuck Shop, and municipal elections. Allocated work assignments and supervised the volunteer staff in these projects. Recruited and supervised paid staff for the Volunteer Bureau.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Developed and hosted cable T.V. programs on "The Role of Volunteers in Social Services" and "Recreational Facilities for Pre-School Children".

Wrote and distributed press releases and newsletters for my Ratepayers Association and the Volunteer Bureau.

Produced a twice yearly brochure from my alderperson to area residents.

FUND RAISING

Extensive experience in all aspects of fund raising: door to door canvassing; recruitment and supervision of volunteers; management of funds. I organized and implemented the fund raising campaigns of the Canadian Cancer Society for five years.

In 1967 I wrote a report on the need for a Volunteer Bureau in Anywhere, and subsequently obtained government funding.

BUDGETING

Managed the funds raised in the General Hospital Tuck Shop and allocated money to hospital services. As Chairperson of the Volunteer Bureau Board of Directors, I administered the Bureau's budget.

EDUCATION

University of Anywhere, currently working toward Certificate in Public Administration, 1976 to present.

Secondary School Graduation Diploma, Happy Days Secondary School, 1952.

References available on request.

Where to find job leads

Keep detailed records of all the job possibilities you hear of. The name and address of every person, company or organization you plan to contact should be recorded on a separate page or file card, so that you can add information about each one.

Following is a list of some sources worth exploring in your search for job leads.

- Discuss your plans with friends and colleagues and ask them to let you know if they hear of anything suitable. Even if they cannot help, they may be able to introduce you to people who can.
- Register with your local Canada Employment Centre. In addition to regularly checking the Centre's job listings, ask to speak to a counsellor. He or she may be able to suggest job areas where opportunities exist.
- Read through all the local newspapers, particularly the business sections, for news of companies or organizations which will be expanding or opening up in your area. Follow up with job applications to these companies or other organizations.
- Study all the job advertisements in the newspapers, not just those of interest to you. You'll get a picture of the current job market, types of positions available, salaries and what qualifications are required.
- Check the Professional, Business or Trade publications which relate to your occupational area. Many jobs which are never advertised in newspapers are listed in these types of publications.
- Talk to commercial employment agencies and register with those you think would be most useful. Names and addresses can be found in the Yellow Pages. Before registering with an agency, find out if there is a fee for the service.
- Contact the personnel offices of companies and government or private organizations where you might like to work. If they give you an application form, complete and return it promptly with a copy of your resume if you have not already sent one.

Applying for the job

You can submit an application in response to a job advertisement or simply approach a company or organization for which you might like to work. In either case if you are making a written application, send a copy of your resume with a brief typewritten covering letter to the personnel director or, in some cases, the director of a particular department.

The purpose of the covering letter is to explain your reason for writing and highlight the most relevant aspects of your experience. Your letter should stimulate the reader's interest so that he/she will want to see the resume.

If you are answering a job advertisement, in your covering letter:

- say when and where it appeared
- discuss your qualifications and experience – briefly, as details are in your resume
- say why you are interested in the job, showing how your qualifications relate to the job
- finally, indicate your interest in an interview and say that you will telephone for an appointment on a particular date.

If you are applying to companies or organizations where you don't know of definite openings, in your covering letter:

- explain your reasons for writing – you may have heard that the company is expanding or you may simply be interested in the types of jobs that exist within the company
- outline your qualifications
- ask if there is any possibility of future employment prospects in your job area
- indicate an interest in a meeting and say when you will follow up.

In some cases you may prefer a more personal approach. You could contact the prospective employer by phone or by visiting the personnel office. If you choose the latter approach, always take a copy of your resume and be prepared to complete an application form. A personal visit is usually more effective than a telephone call.

You will probably be using all the approaches previously described in the course of your job hunt. Following are some suggestions which should be helpful.

- Keep careful records of each application you submit.
- When applying for a job, whether in writing or in person, never say you will do 'anything'. Instead explain what you can do and ask if there is a suitable opening.
- Your letter or visit should always be followed by a phone call, or your application might simply be tucked away indefinitely.
- Your objective in telephoning after you have submitted your application, is to convince the employer to offer you an interview. You will need to be assertive in order to do this, but at the same time avoid antagonizing the employer by constant enquiries at inconvenient times. Don't be discouraged when you are refused an interview. If you send out twenty applications and receive five responses you will be doing well.

The interview

You may be feeling anxious about the interview situation and be concerned that your fears will be obvious during the interview. Employers are aware of these concerns, so try to relax and focus your attention on the discussion.

The interview serves two purposes. It provides the employer with the opportunity to assess you, but it also gives you the opportunity to assess the employer and the job she/he is offering.

Following are some suggestions to help you prepare for your interviews.

- Before you go to an interview find out as much as you can about the company. Its personnel department, information office or public relations department could help. You may also find useful information in the business section of your local library. The information will be useful during the interview, and the employer will be impressed by your initiative in seeking it out.

- Find out about your legal rights before an interview. There are laws in Ontario obliging employers to hire and pay women on an equal basis with men.
- You should have names and addresses of at least three references, for example, teachers and former employers who are aware they may be contacted.
- Arrive on time and be prepared to complete an application form and, in some instances, a simple skill test. If you feel that the test you have been given goes beyond assessing your skills (e.g. typing, English, math) ask the employer what it is. If, for example, you have been given a personality test, you may decide that you do not wish to complete it. But when you make your decision remember that refusal to complete a test could exclude you from consideration for the job.
- Remember that an interview is a business meeting and dress appropriately. Dress codes are not as rigid today as they were ten years ago, but certain types of dress are still considered inappropriate in the interview. For example, jeans are rarely ever acceptable and while a pantsuit may be suitable, slacks and a sweater are not. Take into account the type of company when selecting clothes for an interview – a bank is likely to adhere to more conservative standards of dress than an advertising agency. However, unless you are applying for a model's job it is always safer to select simple, tailored clothes rather than a glamorous outfit.
- Some people are bothered by smoke, so check with the interviewer before lighting a cigarette. If you do not see any ashtrays be alert for a 'No Smoking' sign.
- Let the interviewer guide the interview but don't be passive. If you feel that some of your most valuable experience has been overlooked, create the opportunity to discuss it.
- Listen carefully to what the interviewer says and don't be afraid to ask questions. In fact, the interviewer will probably be impressed if you demonstrate your interest by asking relevant questions.
- Don't worry if there is a pause in the conversation. The interviewer will not be concerned if you pause and think about a question before answering it.

- You will almost always be asked about your previous experience. Be prepared to provide a good summary of what you have done and the skills you have developed.
- You may be asked why you think you are a good candidate for a job. This is not an easy question so be prepared to explain how your qualifications relate to the requirements of the job. If you are applying for a more senior position, you may also be asked to express your opinion on general issues which relate to the organization. For example, if you are an environmental engineer, you could be asked for your opinions on the economics of pollution control.
- Some interviewers may ask questions that are not legal under the Human Rights Code. Questions, either given orally or in writing, should relate directly to your ability to do the job. The Code prohibits inquiries about family status, number of children, birth control, age, child care arrangements, or any other subject that it defines as grounds for discrimination. These questions are often an inappropriate way for the employer to express concern about your reliability, your willingness to travel or move, or your ability to undertake a long-term commitment. You may want to respond to such questions by answering the underlying questions, indicating that you consider yourself to be reliable and

committed. Should the question be of a personal nature, such as reference to birth control, you may want to indicate that the Human Rights Code prohibits this type of question, or you may prefer not to answer the question.

While the interviewing situation calls for tact and judgement, it is also important to keep your legal rights in mind. For more information on this subject, you may wish to call the Ontario Human Rights Commission (416) 965-6841 and request their publication, "Employment Application Forms and Interviews".

- Make a point of your qualifications and interest in the position, rather than any personal or financial need. Employers are more interested in what you can do for them, than what they can do for you.
- You will probably be asked what salary you expect. Before an interview try to find out the current salary range in the particular job field, but if this is not possible you can respond by asking what salary range the company is offering for that position. Don't be afraid to discuss money. Not only is salary important to your own sense of personal worth, it also represents the value the company assigns to you as an employee.

- Discuss working conditions in detail. In some cases there are two interviews and this subject may not be raised until the second one. Ask about fringe benefits, such as pension plans and sick leave, hours of work, performance reviews and opportunities for advancement.
- Never criticize former employers. It creates a negative impression.
- Don't overstay your welcome – watch for signs that the interview is coming to an end. You don't need to leave abruptly. If you have additional questions regarding the job, raise them, and ask the interviewer if he/she needs any further information.
- Before leaving ask when the hiring decision will be made.

After the interview you may wish to write a short letter thanking the employer for the interview. If you have still not heard from the employer a few days after the date the decision was due, call and ask if the position has been filled.

The job offer

Don't be discouraged if you are not successful right away. You learn something from each interview and are better prepared for the next.

If you are successful, the employer will make a definite job offer telling you what the job involves, what your starting salary will be and when you start. Don't be afraid to ask questions – you may even be able to negotiate more suitable terms and conditions of employment.

If you are not sure about the offer, ask if you might have some time to consider it and let the employer know your decision at the arranged time.

Where do you go from here?

You are now employed after a great deal of planning and hard work. Beginning a new job can be an exciting challenge: you are eager to succeed and feeling enthusiastic and motivated.

If, however, you have found that your first job is not everything you had hoped for, don't be discouraged too easily. Before deciding what your next step should be, examine your job carefully. Ask yourself: what are the major disadvantages in my present position? It might be working conditions, the type of work you are being assigned, either too much or too little responsibility, or your relationship with your supervisor. Make a note of everything in the job that bothers you. Now try to decide if there is anything you can do to improve your job. For example, if you are dissatisfied because you have been given too little supervision, perhaps you should take the initiative and approach your supervisor for guidance more often. It may not be possible to resolve all the problems, and you may decide that the job is simply unsuitable. Having made this decision, your next step is to begin looking for another job. Resist the temptation to resign before you have found something else. Despite your dissatisfaction, try to do a good job. When you apply for new positions your present supervisor may be contacted for a reference. Don't allow a poor performance in this job to stand in the way of future opportunities.

If you have decided that your present position is suitable, you will be eager to do well in the job. The following suggestions should help you make this job the beginning of a rewarding career.

- Look at the job as a training opportunity to prepare you for something better, and take advantage of every opportunity to learn new skills.
- Take on additional responsibilities whenever possible. If your supervisor does not ask you to do any extra work, suggest projects you could undertake.
- Show an interest in other job areas, and learn as much as you can about the company or organization.
- Maintain a high profile – there is little point taking on additional responsibilities if you are not given credit for your work. Make sure your supervisor knows what you are doing.
- Ask for salary increases when appropriate. Your salary represents your value as an employee. If you show no interest in what you are paid, you will probably be perceived as less committed to your career.

- Ask for promotions – they are seldom offered if you have never demonstrated an interest in moving up. You could create opportunities to discuss your performance and future advancement with your supervisor. Remember people like being asked for advice.
- Continue your education if this will improve your chances of promotion. Colleges and universities offer a variety of extension programs for people who are already employed.
- If there is little likelihood of advancement within the company or organization, begin looking elsewhere for a better job. But don't resign until you have found something else. However, avoid changing jobs too frequently as prospective employers may consider you unstable. In each job stay at least long enough to demonstrate your commitment and master the work.

- Deal with problems on the job when they arise. Minor difficulties can develop into more serious problems if they are not resolved.

A significant part of your lifetime will be spent in your jobs. Unless you enjoy them, the time you spend at work can seem like an eternity. No job is perfect, but you should aim for one in which you enjoy at least some aspects of the work.

Although your job is important, it is only one part of your life. Because women have not internalized the myth that career success requires total absorption in the job, they are more adept at dividing their time and attention creatively. With a little juggling you can accommodate home, children and work, and enjoy all of them.



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